

# BEST PRACTICE CATALOG

Project Title: **ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY**

Function Category: ☒ PATIENT-FOCUSED   ☐ ORGANIZATION   ☐ STRUCTURES

Subcategory: **Care of Patients**

Heading: **Programming**

Key Word(s): **Animal Therapy**

Contact Person: **Penny Armato**

Telephone Number: **(562) 651-4309**

Hospital: **Metropolitan State Hospital**

**Purpose:** The use of animals as a therapy is recognized as a valid form of treatment with the mentally ill. Utilization of this program has been available in our skilled nursing units, children and adolescent treatment center, oasis community center, psychosocial rehabilitation unit, and physical therapy program.

**Brief Description:** The training for this program is facilitated by the “Create a Smile” Animal Assisted Therapy Team. This non-profit organization provides an 8-hour in-service training and evaluation of the volunteer and their animal. The volunteer then completes a background clearance, orientation to the facility and supervised placement in the hospital. To ensure the health and safety of all patients, staff, volunteers, and animals involved in the AAT program, strict adherence to procedures shall be followed. Visits occur on a regular basis with direct staff supervision; documentation of the hours and evaluation are maintained. Polaroid photos are taken with the patient and the animal during the visit.

**Selection Basis/Criteria:**

The following items are available regarding this Best Practice:

☐ Photographs   ☐ Video Tape   ☐ Drawings   ☐ Manual

☐ Other : \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SUBMITTED: **October 13, 1998**